

Project 2 – Redesign of Jones Plaza

Final Review: Week of April 27 – TBA

Part III, Deadlines: April 1, Wednesday at 6pm

Weekly crits until deadline of Friday, April 24, 2009

You have explored conceptual ideas through mind mapping and site analysis. Now you must commit to one conceptual idea about how you will address the Redesign of Jones Plaza. The program initially provided to you is repeated below.

Remember though, creating a public plaza for Houston is not the same as creating one for any other city. The program establishes the need of the design, but the design should be inspired through the context (both natural and man-made). This was the intention for asking you to develop your site analysis as you explored mind mapping. At this point, it is important for you to go back to the immediate and larger context of Houston to seek inspiration for your conceptual design. Establish a direction for this and move forward to complete a design for the plaza. When you think about Houston, what comes to mind? When you think about the downtown and those iconic structures that surround the existing site, what inspires you?

- 1) Identify your final conceptual design represented both in mind map and drawing – (a parti is fine) Represents the intention of the design and expresses where the final design originates – should come from a place of inspiration. Think of it as a gestural drawing – a quick expression of the overall design idea.
- 2) Write a draft problem statement.
- 3) Re-write the program as a priority and relationship matrix. Establish the space, their size and rate the relationships from one space to another. A matrix example could be:

	Space 1 200sf	Space 2 300sf	Space 3 1000sf	Space 4 2000sf
Space 1 200sf		X	X	X
Space 2 300sf	X		X	X
Space 3 1000sf	X	X		X
Space 4 2000sf	X	X	X	

Direct Relationship X Indirect Relationship X No significant Relationship X

- 4) Develop a series of templates to help you study the site fully and use these to establish the organizational programmatic uses on the site.

Must be completed by Wednesday, April 1 – 6pm and posted to your student folder.

- 5) From this organizational program, begin to redesign the plaza. Remember, you may not be able to accomplish all of their desires, so prioritizing these as they relate to your conceptual ideas is critical.

Improvement Program for Jones Plaza

Client: Central Houston, Inc. / City of Houston

Vision for Jones Plaza:

Jones Plaza will be an active public square uniquely situated in the heart of downtown Houston's corporate office core and nationally renowned Theater District, a place of sophisticated artistic and design excellence.

JONES PLAZA:

It is a space where one can:

- Go to both day and evening to see and be seen
- Enjoy a glamorous, beautiful meal, have a business lunch or have just a snack to extend the Theater District experience
- Be comfortable in a place with a green garden feel, enjoy the seasons
- Go to an iconic destination defined by sophistication, sense of whimsy, creativity and artistic excellence
- Easily access from sidewalks, streets, parking, tunnel and train

Desired Program Elements:

Excellent public plaza space where one is comfortable:

- Seasonal shade and breezes
- Sight lines from within, adjacent sidewalks and buildings
- Space that accommodates natural pedestrian flows across plaza and from tunnel/ garage below
- Space with activity where one feels comfortable congregating with others: a social space
- Green oasis with seasonal flowers and plantings---respite in a dense, busy, paved environment
- Space that feels like an extension of Jones Hall and Alley Theater experience: forecourt, audio/video projection, etc.
- Space that is special in the evening because of its lighting
- Space that feels exceedingly well managed, safe (space manager on site day and evenings)

Food service day and evenings:

- Trendy, upscale restaurant of 12,000 square feet oriented to 250 destination and business patrons
- A hip place for drinks, quick before performance: snacks, great meal and after performance desserts: surrounding employees, Theater District regulars/ patrons and residents
- Meal prices range from \$12 to \$40 per person---menu places accent on health, featuring fresh preparation of selected products using a variety of local/regional purveyors; adjusted seasonally, menu would include broiled, grilled and baked American specialties; in-house bakery and reasonably priced wine selection
- Of a conservatory type design that incorporates feeling of performance, entertainment in a green setting: welcoming bar and piano, private dining area, visual kitchen, outdoor patio and ability to cater events on the plaza

Accommodate programming---events and activities:

- Special functions of performing arts organizations
- Small (200-300 attendance) concerts/ performances
- Catered special events: receptions, parties, etc.
- Temporary art exhibits
- Potentially other: checked out books, games, etc.

Accommodate the obvious:

- Buy a newspaper
- Have a WiFi connection
- Find out what's going on in the halls around
- Find a restroom

Iconic artistic elements ranging from freestanding art installation to environmental art using landscaping, fixtures, water, lighting, air shafts, etc.

Parking valet function in addition to major parking garage entrances for performance halls and business

Easily recognized comfortable connection to tunnel system and light rail transit station

Design considerations:

Public areas must be flexible and adaptable

Use of existing structure, utilities preferred as design/cost consideration

Two major underground garage entrances (Texas & Capitol) must remain

Four stair connections to garage must remain (although could be enhanced)

Ventilation of garage must be accommodated

Roof of garage approximately at street level must remain waterproof

Minimize barriers due to elevation change from sidewalks

Site assets:

Great location for public square in heart of one of country's largest performing arts/ business districts

Activity in neighborhood day and night 7 days per week

Very large daytime population within two blocks: 25,000 to 30,000; large evening population within two blocks: 5,000 to 15,000 (max.)

Site connects to Theater District and downtown office building tunnel systems

Surrounding architecture is magnificent collection of late 20th century works: Alley (Franzen), Jones Hall (CRS), Pennzoil (Johnson), Bank of America (Johnson)

Site has legacy of large events open to the public

Current issues with current design/ programming:

Plaza sparsely populated except infrequent occasion when there is a programmed event

Smith and Texas face of plaza is a large uninviting wall of structures

Space is designed for performances on stage, not really flexible

Large amount of site dedicated to rarely used restroom facilities intended for large events

Space does not accommodate day to day public social life

Too much hard surface; not enough green

While there is tunnel access to the plaza, using the narrow stairs is not a comfortable experience

Plaza Bistro restaurant is poorly utilized---location could be a major factor (buried at back of plaza in a building that looks like the restroom buildings)

Requirements for Final Review:

Complete Re-design of Jones Plaza which is represented by:

- Elevation drawings as needed to express the full understanding of the plaza redesign
- Site Sections as needed to express a full understanding of the plaza redesign
- Site Plan Macro – could be two site plans but must include context to orient viewer to the site as it relates to the overall city.
- Site Plan Immediate (Micro) – must include adjacent blocks for contextual orientation
- Model which represents the design
- Rendered Site Plan of Immediate Plaza expressing materials and site vegetation along with identification of structures
- Character Sketches which represent the sense of place created through your design. Must include people, activity and be lively and interactive. More drawings clearly express a better understanding of the space – Remember, you should be representing the context in these drawings so make sure you can show the viewer the relationship of the plaza to the adjacent buildings (sequential perspectives work well for this)

NOTE: You will decide how you do your drawings and how many to do – as a graduate student, you must consider what it takes to express your design fully. Drawings must be complete and include student's name, scale of drawings, & north arrow as applicable.